

Abstract

A dispensing device is equipped to monitor product demand and consumer traffic that passes by the machine. The dispensing device collects and analyzes product demand data to determine optimal product stocking, to offer products to undecided consumers and to offer substitute products when a selected product is out of stock. The substitute product may be determined according to which alternate product historically has the highest demand when a particular selected product is unavailable. Alternatively, the substitute product may be determined according to which stocked item has an imminent expiration date. Also, the substitute product may be predetermined by an operator of a vending machine or may be determined by other factors. The substitute product may further be offered to the customer at a discounted price.

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